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ABSTRACT

Textbooks have traditionally been the focus of classroom instruction, however, the role of textbooks has been increasingly challenged by various groups. They have raised questions about the quality and content of textbooks in U.S. classrooms. This document provides a program of a 1989 conference that addressed issues related to the role and quality of textbooks in the classroom. The document consists of a brief description of each of the five conference sessions and the questions they addressed, and a compilation of summary statements prepared by presenters. The five, three-hour sessions dealt with: (1) the role of content, (2) the selection and organization of content, (3) political considerations, (4) classroom consumers of textbooks, and (5) publishers. (AS)

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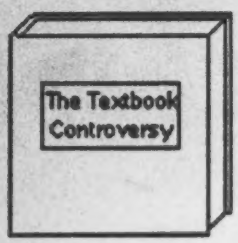

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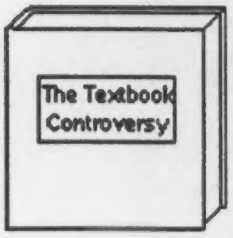

Geneseo

Presents

Conversations in the Disciplines:
The Textbook Controversy

Thursday, April 6th through Saturday April 8th, 1989

College Union Building Hunt Room

Project Director:
Dr. John G. Herlihy
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
SUNY Geneseo

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The Textbook Controversy

A Program of the Conversations in the Disciplines

Conducted at SUNY Geneseo

April 6-8, 1989

Project Director
Dr. John G. Herlihy
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Program Summary
May 20, 1989

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Dr. John G. Herlihy

Textbooks have been a major part of the educational scene. Numerous studies have indicated that as much as ninety per cent of instructional time is devoted to texts and other print materials. A textbook, however, is inanimate; it exists in a dynamic social setting. In the past, some texts became national institutions, such as McGuffey's Readers, Muzzey's American History and McGruder's American Government. The role and place of these textboks was never seriously questioned.

However, over the past few decades these traditional views have been challenged by groups from all avenues of American life. Questions/issues related to the nature of content, political view points, the quality of the products and the role of the text in instruction have come to the fore. Department of Education publications use terms like "dumbing down of texts." Best sellers, such as Hirsch's Cultural Literacy, challenge the quality of the content. The establishment of increased academic criteria by leading states, such as California, force reexamination of this basic tool. The research on texts as readable documents by Bonnie Armbruster et al. has led to new terminology such as "considerate texts". All of these and other events have raised questions about the quality and role and place of textbooks in America's classrooms. Textbooks are no longer unquestioned authoritative tomes but the target of scrutiny by a plethora of internal and external forces that are influencing American education.

This conference attempted to address a number of these topics. The program was designed about five, three hour, sessions over a three day period. Each of these sessions was led by a panel of four speakers. Each presenter delivered a twenty to thirty ninute speech which was followed by a one hour "conversation" with the audience. This format was chosen to enhance dialogue among the panelists and between the audience and the panelists.

A brief description of each session is found in the Table of Contents. A listing of the four presenters and key questions to be addressed by each panel is found on the first page of each section of this document. Each panelist prepared a two page summary of the presentation. This document is a compilation of these summary statements and offers a record of the Textbook Controversy program conducted April 6-8, 1989.

Session I: ROLE OF CONTENT

Day and Time: Thursday, April 6, 1989
1:00-4:00 P.M.

Presenters:

Dr. William Cook
SUNY Geneseo

Dr. Robert Strayer
SUNY Brockport

Dr. Ronald Herzman
SUNY Geneseo

Dr. Linda Biemer
SUNY Binghamton

Issues and questions:

- what information should be involved? be omitted? be expanded? be reduced in scope?
- what problems in selecting and organizing content need to be addressed?
- what content issues, questions, problems need to be addressed? be stressed?
- what hindrance or blockages are inherent in the content and how can they be successfully resolved with integrity?
- what relationships must exist between academic scholars and accepted wisdom?
- what relationships must exist between academic scholars and their audience? (other teachers and students as consumers of this product)
- what choices/decisions re content must be made in designing a textbook?
- what constraints exist to limit content development?

COVERAGE AND COHERENCE: WRITING A TEXT ON GLOBAL HISTORY

Robert W. Strayer: SUNY Brockport

Recent experience in writing a college level textbook in modern world history (The Making of the Modern World, St. Martin's Press, 1989) has made me aware of the many problems in articulating the content of this vast subject. The central dilemma is familiar in its general contours but perhaps unique in scale: it is the problem of selectivity or, put another way, the tension between the impulse toward coverage and the need for coherence. I have identified a series of principles that may help to manage, though not to eliminate, this tension.

The first is thematic selectivity. A global history text simply cannot do everything and should not try to. We need a theme that is of wide applicability, has comparative implications, and reflects the deeper movements of historical change. The theme that I have chosen is the notion of "development," conceived as the effort to incorporate modern science and technology into human societies.

A second principle is that of sampling. Since we cannot reasonably survey every regional culture in the world, we must choose a more modest sample of them to use as case studies of our major theme. I have chosen Europe, because the modern transformation began there, and then followed with India, China and Africa as major non-western cases.

The danger of sampling, however, is that of fragmentation--writing world history as a series of abbreviated and unrelated regional histories. To counter this possibility two additional emphases are needed. The first is connections. World history is not the side-by-side stories of particular countries, regions, or civilizations; it is rather an account of their

intersections or encounters. Over the last several centuries, the most compelling such intersection has been between an expanding western civilization, allegedly bearing with it the seeds of modernity, and virtually everyone else.

A further antidote to fragmentation lies in constant comparison. Global history is comparative history and the range of comparative questions that can be posed is endless. Why was Europe, rather than China or the Middle East, the site of the first modern transformation? How has Europe's experience of the modern transformation differed from that of later modernizing societies? Why has the modern transformation been associated with revolutionary unheaval in some places (France, Russia, China) and not in others (Japan, India, Germany, Turkey)? How have socialist and capitalist paths to the modern world differed? Why has western style democracy taken deeper root in India than in Africa or Latin America?

Two additional tensions inform the writing of global history texts. One involves the relationship between the "big picture" and the lives of individual people. How can we allow students to hear authentic individual voices of real people even while they reconstruct the experience of such people in a necessarily more abstract form? The other tension concerns the proper balance between narrative and analysis. Global history tells a story, both at the world level and in terms of particular areas. But it should also raise major questions about why things turned out as they did and whether alternatives were ever conceivable. Only in such a way can a global history textbook convey a sense of historical inquiry as a continuing, rich, and compelling discourse about human affairs.

"THE TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSY: THE ROLE OF CONTENT"

Linda Biemer

THREE INTERRELATED CONTENT ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED: (1) THE ROLE OF CONTENT AS SEEN BY THE AUTHOR; (2) THE BREADTH VERSUS DEPTH DEBATE; AND (3) THE USE AND MISUSE OF TEXTBOOKS.

(1) ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS HAVE A TREMENDOUSLY LARGE AUDIENCE, AND THUS THE BOOKS' CONTENT--DEFINED AS KNOWLEDGE (OR FACTS), CONCEPTS, SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND VALUES--HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR SHAPING STUDENTS' IMAGES OF THE WORLD. WHICH IMAGES TO PRESENT BECOMES THE PREROGATIVE OF THE AUTHOR WHOSE OWN BREADTH AND DEPTH OF THE TOPICS, AS WELL AS BIASES, ATTITUDES AND VALUES, CANNOT HELP BUT DETERMINE THE IMAGES. THOSE SUBJECTIVITIES ARE OFTEN LIMITED SOMEWHAT BY EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS WHOSE VIEWS MAY DIFFER WITH THE AUTHOR AND WHOSE EYES ARE ALWAYS SCANNING THE MARKET.

(2) EVEN THOUGH THE PHRASE "LESS IS MORE" IS FREQUENTLY HEARD, AUTHORS, PUBLISHERS, AND CONSUMERS OF TEXTS--BOTH ADMINISTRATORS WHO BUY AND TEACHERS WHO USE TEXTBOOKS, HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN LIMITING THE SCOPE OF A TEXT. EVERYONE WANTS HIS OR HER FAVORITE BITS OF KNOWLEDGE IN A TEXT. HOW MUCH <u>IS</u> ENOUGH WHETHER IT BE BREADTH OR DEPTH WE'RE TALKING ABOUT? THIS AUTHOR GOES FOR BOTH

BY SUPPLEMENTING THE BROAD FACTS WITH PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS--DIARY AND JOURNAL ENTRIES, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, SPEECHES, CHARTS AND GRAPHS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AMONG OTHERS. IN ADDITION, SHE REMINDS TEACHERS THAT THEY, AS CURRICULUM AND DECISION MAKERS, SHOULD BE PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS TO ALSO PROVIDE DEPTH TO THE TOPICS TEACHERS HAVE CHOSEN TO EMPHASIZE, THAT IS, SPEND MORE TIME ON.

(3) TEACHERS NEED BACKGROUND IN, PREPARATION IN HOW TO USE TEXTBOOKS EFFECTIVELY. MERELY ASSIGNING LENGTHY READING PASSAGES--I DARE SAY, UNFORTUNATELY, THE MOST COMMON USE OF TEXTBOOKS--IS NOT AN ADEQUATE WAY TO HELP MOST STUDENTS LEARN. THE VOCABULARY AND CONCEPT LOAD OF MOST SENTENCES IN A SOCIAL STUDIES TEXT IS MORE THAN MANY STUDENTS CAN HANDLE THROUGH INDEPENDENT READING.

SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS HAVE IMPROVED OVER THE YEARS AS THEY SEEK TO TELL THE HISTORY OF ALL OF THE PEOPLE IN A COUNTRY OR A STATE, NOT MERELY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SEEN AS THE POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC LEADERS. THIS SOCIAL HISTORY EMPHASIS, WHICH HAS BEEN FELT ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUSES, IN THE RESPECTED JOURNALS, AND IN PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS MEETINGS, IS FINALLY FINDING ITS WAY INTO SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS.

Session II: SELECTION AND ORGANIZATION OF CONTENT

Day and Time: Thursday, April 6, 1989
7:00-10:00 P.M.

Presenters:

Dr. Arthur Woodward
University of Rochester

Dr. Gilbert Sewall
American Textbook Council

Dr. Daniel Fleming
Virginia Tech and State University

Dr. Jean Ciborowski
Boston Children's Hospital

Issues and questions:

- questions relating to design and format of textbooks
- questions relating to the organization of content
- questions relating to writing style/prose of authors
- questions relating to nature of textbooks; a compendium of facts or an organizer of concepts
- questions relating to the relative quantity/amount of support materials (visuals, questions, bibliography, etc.) in a textbook
- role of "considerate texts" in designing books
- are textbooks "dumbed down"?
- issues of scope, size, depth, sophistication vs. bulk, weight and portability of texts
- are texts to present description?, be declarative?, to raise questions? other alternatives?

The Role of Illustrations in the Design of Textbooks

Arthur Woodward
University of Rochester

Conversations in the Discipline Conference
SUNY Geneseo, March 6-8, 1989

Open any textbook and one feature stands out above all others--these books are richly and colorfully illustrated. What are the reasons for including so many illustrations in textbooks? It has been argued that illustrations serve to entice students (all of whom seem to be 'reluctant' students) to open the book and read; it is argued that it is important that textbooks mimic the flash and splash of Time and T.V. It is also suggested that illustrations serve a motivational purpose--students are encouraged to read the text and become engaged with it. A third suggestion and one rarely articulated is that illustrations are an aid to learning and understanding content.

Although there is relatively little research on why illustrations are chosen and how they are used, work by Evans, Watson, and Willows (1987) in Canada is suggestive. They found that publishers and editors rarely consulted research about illustrations and instead relied on their intuition that illustrations increased student motivation. Market demand was also a crucial influence in including illustrations in textbooks--as was the desire to match the competition. Evans et al. interviewed teachers and found that while teachers demanded that textbooks contain illustrations (thus confirming research that illustrations are a major selection criterion) these same teachers often did not use or refer to them in their teaching. Interestingly, my analysis of 6th grade science texts found that while there were many illustrations, the teachers guide did not often refer to them.

Market driven demand for illustrations in textbooks has a number of repercussions. In a study comparing one edition of an elementary social studies textbooks with the most recent edition I found that black and white illustrations were substituted for color ones, even if these substitutions were less instructionally effective.

Perhaps these substitutions would not be such an issue if it were not for the fact that illustrations take up large amounts of text space. For example, in study I did of Civics textbooks I found that without illustrations only 53 percent of the average textbooks consisted of text

(range 34-76%). There was an average of one page of illustrations to 1.3 content pages. Thirty seven percent of the illustrations had no explicit relation to the content, 55 percent were duplications of content or examples of it (some illustrations were poor, others good), and only 13% of the illustrations were judged to extend the content in some way. In terms of three elementary science series, illustrations took up between 35 to 39% of content pages. It was found that illustrations that were instructionally effective ranged from 35, to 52, to 67 percent of particular series. It appeared that those illustrations that were instructionally relevant, had captions that were more than titles or names, and which were highlighted in the text were instructionally effective.

To judge illustrations one must really judge their instructional effectiveness and this can only be done in light of the content they are supposed to support. This content, as Diane Ravitch, Linus Pauling and others suggest, should have depth that encourages interest and learning. It follows that the instructional effectiveness of illustrations should be judge in light of its support of content learning. It should not be judge in terms of so-called criteria such as 'enticement' and 'motivation.'

If we reach consensus about what content should be included in textbooks (and everything cannot be included as seems to be the case in contemporary textbooks) then judging illustrations for their instructional effectiveness becomes an important and legitimate criterion for selecting textbooks. Until then extreme caution should be exercised in judging textbooks by their illustrations, for at the moment those illustrations often serve a marketing and aesthetic function rather than an instructional one.

TEXTBOOK ORGANIZATION AND WRITING: TODAY AND TOMORROW

By

Gilbert T. Sewall
American Textbook Council

For several years I have been working on curricular issues in the social studies curriculum and especially on the literary and historiographic merit of textbooks. I have been trying to gauge the effectiveness of these important instructional materials. During this extended research I have become convinced that mass-market history and social studies textbooks and their peripherals constitute the foundation of the taught curriculum, and that they are frequently the singular source of information about history, government, economics, global conditions, and geography for students and teachers alike.

Social studies textbooks create something very close to a de facto national curriculum in these subjects. How they are created, selected, and used does much to standardize what is taught and learned in elementary and secondary schools, be they in Rochester or San Diego.

In 1987, I authored a report for the Educational Excellence Network that reviewed eleven leading American history textbooks at the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade level. This was the first systematic, expert, qualitative review of the literature. I commissioned a dozen leading historians, editors, and educators to write extensive, independent, multiple reviews about their literary qualities, content, and format. From their findings I made general conclusions about American history texts--and by extension-- about instructional materials in the social studies.

Most disturbing, the review panel and I concluded that the writing in most mass-market history and social studies textbooks was wooden, lifeless, abstract, in a word, boring. Notably so at the elementary level.

As educators, all of us understand how difficult it is to get students to master basic reading skills and improve their level of reading comprehension. This becomes ever more problematic in a quick-hit television age. The failure of text in history textbooks makes such mastery even more difficult, dampening student enthusiasm by the absence of fetching narrative and description.

All good historical writing reveals a human voice, asserted with strong verbs, vivid anecdotes, lively quotations, and other literary devices. Running narrative has no substitute; without it there is no textual weave, no context, no basic story that leads to retention and interpretation of

information. Texts need to refocus on historical stories and people. Young people of both sexes enjoy action-packed tales, and history is full of them. Biography provides universals in particulars, records human anxieties and triumphs, revealing sorrows and hopes, and giving young people some model of how heroes and villians steered their lives.

The expository nature of social studies textbooks is atrophied. In the place of a strong written text, textbooks have substituted a nervous, fragmented, kaleidoscopic, multivalent learning tool that seems designed really for non-readers.

The gray no-nonsense history primer of the past is long gone. Textbooks have expanded into unwieldy behemoths in order to try to provide something for everybody. Multiple typefaces and white space, photographs and political cartoons, charts, graphs, and boxes, study exercises and skills applications create a shimmering mosiac. Sometimes the individual accessories are tasteful and smart. A riot of colors and state of the art graphics may excite textbook buyers. But such books signal by their vacuous narrative that the epic stories of the past do not spark or cannot sustain student interest, indeed that these stories have lost their ability to excite, charm, and edify today's students.

I heard recently from a seasoned junior high school teacher in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania--a place where one might expect the local youth to have some natural affinity for American history. The teacher was having great difficulty finding a U.S. history text for his eighth-graders. While he agreed that the eighth-grade text cited in my report was indeed superior in style and content to the competition, he confessed that the book was too difficult for many of his students to read. "I have everything from fifth-grade level to eleventh-grade level readers in the same classroom," he said. "I am looking for a book that might be written for more basic readers--and yet still capture the drama of the American experience. It isn't there."

Now, I ask, isn't a curriculum requiring students to read books that fail to appreciate the fundamental qualities of what trade publishers call "a good read" asking for low student interest and retention? A "good read," after all, is not necessarily a "complex read." It is a memorable read.

Consider the numerous excellent trade books for children and young adults. To hold different textual standards for textbooks is to risk academic alienation. These narrative deficiencies may result in sensational headlines today. They may result an amnesiac citizen-based democracy tomorrow.

Social Studies Textbook: Whose Priorities?

Dan B. Fleming
Professor of Social Studies Education
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0313

Paper Summary

Social studies textbooks have become a major focal point of controversy over the past decade as many different groups have made demands that are often contradictory in nature. Politicians have even used textbook studies to advance their own agendas. Textbooks are vulnerable because they are one of the few concrete pieces of evidence that critics of schools can attack and document. Texts are an important tool of teachers but generalizations are dangerous concerning their use.

Perhaps the heart of the textbook problem is one of deciding purposes and the organization of the social studies curriculum. Does the text serve as a provider of detailed information, as a developer of skills, or case studies of ethical dilemmas, or all three? What knowledge is of most worth? Should coverage or depth be the emphasis? Should primary sources be included? All these questions are vital to texts.

What problems does nationalistic bias cause? Should the texts promote patriotism? Do texts help in describing key events contributing to decision-making such as the Gulf of Tonkin incident in the Vietnam War where students may learn that their leaders lie? What space should be given to various minorities and special interest groups from both the right and the left? Finally, is the classroom teacher to handle all of this? Unless we make significant reforms in the K-12 organization of the social studies curriculum, it is unlikely that social studies textbooks can ever be written that will satisfy their critics. While textbook "bashing" does have some merit, the real reforms are needed in the curriculum.

IMPROVING TEXTBOOK USABILITY

JEAN CIBOROWSKI PH.D

With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Education Development Center, Inc. and RMC Research undertook a project to improve textbooks for mainstreamed students with learning problems. The project involved the following sequence of steps

- reviewing the literature on learning problems and effective learning strategies for different special needs populations
- developing a text analysis tool to determine if textbooks contain effective teaching strategies
- using the tool to analyze twelve widely-used social studies and science textbooks at both the elementary and secondary level
- verifying the initial analysis by teachers who use the analyzed texts in classrooms with students who experience learning problems
- disseminating the findings at a national conference attended by publishers, educators, researchers, teacher trainers, professional organizations, and textbook adopters

The major findings in the textbook analysis were:

- Many textbooks failed to incorporate effective methods of instruction for students with learning problems; rather, most activities for special learners were poorly integrated, often inappropriate, and dull
- In particular, textbooks for secondary students seldom included important information about organizational, study, and test-taking strategies
- Textbooks did not highlight text structures known to facilitate comprehension and recall

Based on these findings, we recommended to publishers that in order to make textbooks more usable for mildly handicapped students, they should

- build in activities that set the stage for reading: focusing instruction, activating prior knowledge, and previewing the text
- pay attention to facilitating comprehension by teaching students how to engage in active reading, study, and self-monitoring strategies

- provide numerous opportunities to demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways in addition to written tests

In addition, we identified a variety of strategies that teachers can use to make their existing textbooks more usable for students with learning problems.

The project has already had an impact by opening the door to communication and collaboration among publishers, developers, teachers, students, parents, educational researchers, professional organizations, textbook adopters, and testing services. It is our hope that the collaborative process now begun will continue with the end result being that textbooks are more usable for all students across our diverse nation.

Session III: POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Day and Time: Friday, April 7, 1989
9:00-12:00 A.M.

Presenters:

Dr. George Gregory
State Education Department, New York

Dr. John Ellington
Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina

Mr. Landon Risteen, Regional Vice-President
Scott, Foresman and Co.

Dr. Dan Fleming
Virginia Tech and State University

Issues and questions:

- what is the role of a text - question raiser or question answerer?
- who/why are decisions made re the content of a textbook?
- the role of state adoption states and their procedures?
- how much "cutting edge" innovations should be (can be) included?
- role and place of political agencies - legislature, SED, professional organizations, PAC's, etc.
- role and place of controversy - how much? what areas/topics?
- how should "hot topics" be treated?
- trade off of "truth" vs. political reality

George Cuomo

The Politics of Curriculum Development

1. What SED does and why, as these activities relate to curriculum (and thus textbooks)

2. How SED accomplishes its mission - the curriculum development process

3. Questions which remain unanswered.

WHAT: Syllabi, guides, tests based on State Education Law, rules of the Board of Regents, and Commissioner's Regulations

HOW: See earlier outlines

QUESTIONS:

1. What role does SED play in textbook selection?

   a. Syllabi, guides, RCT and Regents examinations help teachers make textbook selections based on content of State-issued materials.

2. Why should SED publish guides and readers for teacher use?

   a. Provide material for teachers in subject areas not served by commercial publishers, e.g. Holocaust, AIDS curriculum, Canadian Studies, Olympic materials.

   b. SED can and does provide a forum for all voices and points of view, e.g. Native American language and social studies guides.

   c. SED provides a "balance" by serving as a conciliator and moderator for conflicting points of view or frames of reference, e.g. Turks and Armenian views, Ukrainian and Russian (Soviet) accounts of the famine in Ukraine, churches' role during the Nazi Holocaust.

   d. SED does not have to consider the profitability of the text or the size of the potential market, e.g. materials developed for the Olympics.

   e. SED can bring together various State and Federal agencies to pool resources and talents of experts in different fields, e.g. AIDS curriculum involved SED, Department of Health, various health professional organizations, and the Center for Disease Control (Atlanta) in design and development of the AIDS curriculum.

3. How should SED develop curriculum materials which present a historically accurate, balanced account of controversial topics?

   . Clearly defined curriculum development process which provides for reviews and revisions at various stages.

   . Involvement of all interested parties at all stages of curriculum development.

   . SED maintains final approval for curriculum document.

Dr. John Ellington
Department of Public Instruction

TEXTBOOK ADOPTION PROCESS IN NORTH CAROLINA

The first step in the adoption of basal textbooks is the appointment of a Textbook Commission as set forth in G.S. 115C-87. The law provides that the Textbook Commission shall be composed of fourteen members to be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The law further prescribes that six of the fourteen members shall be teachers or principals in the elementary school grades, five shall be teachers or principals in the high school grades, one shall be a superintendent of a local school administrative unit, one shall be a parent of an elementary student (grades K-6), and one shall be a parent of a secondary student (grades 7-12) at the time of the appointment.

The State Board of Education adopts textbooks upon recommendations made to the State Board of Education by the Textbook Commission as provided for in Article 8, Part 3, of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes of North Carolina. The textbook adoption process is initiated through notification by the State Superintendent to members of the Textbook Commission that there is to be an adoption in a given subject area or areas. At the same time, the State Superintendent notifies all textbook publishers of the adoption call and invites them to submit any textbooks, and bids for those textbooks, they would like to have considered. Any publisher who submits books for adoption shall register in the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction the names of all agents or other employees authorized to represent that company in the State (G.S. 115C-94).

All books submitted are reviewed and evaluated within a frame of reference determined by the Standard Course of Study. Pursuant to a call and prior to reviewing materials, members of the Textbook Commission and the professional staff of the Department of Public Instruction engage in a thorough overview of the program of studies and develop a concise statement of philosophy, goals, and objectives for the course or subject area under consideration. This statement also reflects any changes or innovations in the program and takes into account current trends and emphases stemming from sound, authoritative research and experimentation.

In the review and evaluation process, each Commission member secures the help of as many advisers as he/she may choose. The number will vary but the usual practice has been for each member to select eight to twelve such advisers. Special expertise in the subject area under consideration is the main criterion in choosing advisers. Each Commission member tries to secure a representative group including classroom teachers, college personnel, supervisory and administrative personnel, and possibly laymen and students.

When the review process is completed, each Commission member files a written evaluation of every book submitted. These evaluation reports must be signed by the member making the report and the Commission chairman delivers them to the State Superintendent who serves as Secretary to the State Board of Education.

At the November meeting of the Board of Education, the members of the Textbook Commission meet with the Board for joint review and present their recommendations. In the evaluation of basal textbooks, the members of the Commission do not concern themselves in any way with the price of the book. The State Board reviews the recommendations of the Commission and the prices submitted by publishers and officially adopts textbooks appropriate for implementing the desired program of instruction in North Carolina schools. Where significant differences in the appropriateness of books were noted by the Textbook Commission, the State Board traditionally has placed priority on securing the best textbooks available.

mrl
February 1988

TEXTBOOK MARKET SEGMENTATION

Summary
Political Considerations in the Textbook Controversy

Dan B. Fleming
Social Studies Education
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0313

Politics, textbooks and the curriculum are intertwined in many ways. In Virginia, a current hot political issue is the newly state mandated K-12 curriculum in family life education. Fundamentalist church groups are up in arms in some local communities over this new program. Politicians are very much involved in this program.

Virginia has an adoption list for social studies textbooks for grades K-12. However, a local school division can select books not on the list. The state list can also help reduce book costs and protect local school districts when books from the list are attacked at the local level. In Virginia, the state department of education oversaw the writing and publication of the books on Virginia history, geography, and government used in grades four and seven.

At the local level attacks can be expected from all directions, whether from the left or the right. This can involve topics ranging from religion and politics to race. There are several current taboo areas in the social studies texts today. They include "gay" rights, aging and relating problems, the distribution of wealth in the U.S., and many great issues of the day. Population growth is particularly ignored. Some critics charge that social studies texts are purveyors of gloom and doom. Many powerful leaders such as former Secretary of Education, William Bennett, want topics such as nuclear war to be left out of the curriculum while

concentrating on the basics of history from the past. In general, contemporary issues will receive little coverage in social studies textbooks. Teachers must rely on other sources.

Students may find texts lack relevance but publishers only follow the marketplace. It is difficult to get text adoption committees to agree on touchy issues such as population growth and solutions. Politics is closely involved with the selection of textbooks and the curriculum of public schools and always will be

Session IV: CLASSROOM CONSUMERS OF TEXTBOOKS

Day and Time: Friday, April 7, 1989
1:30-4:30 P.M.

Presenters:

Dr. Charles Nitsche
Geneseo Central Schools

Dr. William Fetsko
Liverpool Central Schools

Dr. David Martin
SUNY Geneseo

Dr. Gary DeBolt
Syracuse University

Issues and questions:

- what problems do textbooks create for users - teachers and students?
- is the text a tool or resource or a guide or a controlled path?
- how do teachers use/see this device?
- problems in applying a textbook in a classroom
- what should be found in texts that are not now included?
- what is now found in texts that should be deleted?
- how can texts be made more useful to students? to teachers?
- what is student view of textbooks?
- examples of quality in texts and in exercised or in activities
- examples of non-quality in texts and in exercises or in activities

A Teacher and His Students Examine Textbooks

- Charles E. Nitsche, Ph.D.

As a SOCIAL STUDIES teacher at Geneseo Central since 1973, I have had a great deal of experience with textbooks. My experience, both positive and negative in my attempts to teach Psychology, Sociology and Economics to twelfth graders, causes me to comprehend the potentially vital role reserved for textbooks.

If textbooks are properly designed they will fill the needs of the curriculum, the teachers and the student. A usable textbook will enhance a student's ability to deal effectively with essential skills, concepts, and content of a particular course of study. I have never found a single textbook that even adequately deals with this triad. However, I have made use of worthwhile textbooks in conjunction with other resource materials to assist students' learning. I, like many teachers, expect that a good textbook will deal with skills and concepts as well as information. I see the textbook as a vital part of the curriculum, but it is not the curriculum. (Young and Riegeluth).

The "Textbook Controversy" had been raging long before I began my career and I assume it won't end today. Previous research on the issue troubles me for two particular reasons. One flaw relates to a lack of published analysis of the issue by classroom teachers. (Rogers). I am also deeply concerned with a failure to elicit comments and opinions from students.

The major thrust of my presentation deals with students and their view of textbooks. My research base is the result of a survey given to seniors in my Introduction to Sociology course. Almost fifty students responded to the following

questions:

Should your textbooks be used as the main part of your course?

What is your general view of textbook use in Social Studies courses?

What makes a textbook boring?

What makes a textbook interesting?

What would you tell a textbook publisher about design and format of texts, types of questions, use of visuals and writing style?

What do you think of using many books in a course?

My students were pleased to have an active role in my presentation. They - the ultimate consumers of textbooks - have given me interesting insight into the Textbook Controversy. They are also very much interested in hearing about your response to their comments.

Selected Sources

M. Jean Young, Charles M. Riegeluth, "Improving the Textbook Selection Process," 1988, PDK Fastback 275.

Vincent Rogers, "School Texts: The Outlook of Teachers," Education Week, August 3, 1988, p. 56.

G. C. S. Students, "Textbook Surveys," March 28 and 30, 1988.

TEXTBOOKS: A VIEW FROM THE CLASSROOM

by

William J. Fetsko
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Liverpool Central School District
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The inadequacies of current social studies textbooks have been documented in numerous articles. Textbooks, it seems, have become an increasingly expensive resource of questionable quality that tend to create a variety of problems for their users, teachers as well as students.

If textbooks are so poorly written the first question that should legitimately be raised is, why use them? It is a documented fact that in many school districts, they have been, and continue to be, the main instructional tool used in the classroom. The reason seems to be that where budgets are limited, or a teacher's approach to instruction relies primarily on single source of information, textbooks have become the major resource for the students. They outline the course-of-study, provide the basis for in-class discussions and are the primary source of homework assignments. Even in school systems where a variety of instructional materials are available, large sums of money are still spent on basic texts. There is often a policy in these districts, in many cases promoted by the parents, that each student must have a text. The textbook, as a result has become the foundation around which formal instruction frequently takes place.

Given the fact that textbooks are often the main source of information in the classroom the question then becomes -- what problems does this present? To begin with, they tend to establish a level of intellectual inquiry that is mediocre at best. The subject matter is presented in a style that is often boring and superficial. Major events and even historical periods are summarized in a paragraph or two without any attention being given to the circumstances surrounding these happenings. Students are left with a view of history that is often misleading and generally uninspiring.

The level of scholarship is not helped by the constant attempt to write social studies books at a level all students can comprehend. The recitation of facts, rather than the development of concepts and ideas, is often the result. Such an approach severely restricts the creativity of the author. In addition, the review questions that are interspersed throughout the narrative and the end-of-chapter exercises also generally promote the recall of factual information rather than the synthesizing, comparing, contrasting, etc. of ideas. Consequently the students are cheated twice -- facts are readily forgotten and the major concepts are rarely presented in a meaningful fashion. This is one reason for the lack of interest on the part of students for a discipline that is portrayed as static at best and lifeless at worse.

The difficulty of obtaining an accurate portrayal of events is often compounded by the use of textbooks that are ten, fifteen, or even twenty years old. The period of time between the adoption of new texts

in school districts is constantly widening. This problem has been exacerbated by increased prices, prices which have sky rocketed due to the multitude of supplemental materials that are provided with the adoption of a new book. The fact that these aids are often of questionable quality is immaterial. The publisher must still pay for the cost of producing them and the price is thus included in the cost of the individual texts. With the current prices being what they are is it any wonder that school systems wait for almost a decade before making any changes. The impact is two-fold. First, anything that has occurred during the period between adoptions is not presented unless the teachers find other ways to introduce the information. Secondly, any recent interpretations of past events will not be found in the text. Thus, again, the students and teachers are confronted with the problem of trying to develop an understanding and appreciation of social studies based upon incomplete information.

Of course, the fact that most social studies texts strive to "cover" all of known history or a particular discipline only adds to the problem. Whenever you attempt to deal with all of world history in 500 pages or less there is not much room for imaginative writing. Another factor leading to the insipid writing found in textbooks is the overt attempt to avoid issues that may offend a segment of the society. Interpretations of history, for example, that may not be popular with certain individuals or groups are omitted or written about in a very neutral manner. Thus, students are deprived of the opportunity to fully assess and interpret controversial events.

Teachers in New York State are confronted with an additional dilemma. Since New York is not a textbook adoption state (i.e. California, Texas) the major publishers are reluctant to publish books just for the New York market. Where the State curriculum may deviate from the national market, teachers are forced to make do with texts that do not coincide with the New York curricular guidelines.

When everything is considered, what we have is a situation where the classroom teacher is utilizing a resource with severe limitations. The creative teacher, and one fortunate enough to have other materials available, can possibly overcome this handicap. However, I'm forced to believe that in more instances than not the tone and scholarship level in social studies classes is set by the content found in the basic textbook.

Recent studies have criticized American youth for their lack of knowledge in almost every field of study tested. They are portrayed as being intellectually backward and unsophisticated. But when the major resource that they use throughout their educational careers is so seriously flawed is it any wonder that the intellectual curiosity we should be striving to nurture is so often stifled. Unless something is done to improve the quality of the textbooks being written we might be better off doing away with them entirely and use the money to purchase materials that would better challenge and inspire our students. But for most school districts in New York is this a viable alternative when they are able to receive reimbursement for the State for textbook purchases but not for other instructional materials?

GUIDELINES FOR TEXTBOOK SELECTION

by David A. Martin

Some Comments on Textbook Selection for "Classroom Consumers of Textbooks," Session IV of Conversations in the Disciplines: The Textbook Controversy. April 7, 1989

My comments are based upon a lengthy experience as a user of textbooks (college level - introductory economics, several upper-level economics courses, graduate economic education courses for elementary and secondary teachers, and M.B.A. economics courses) as well as an author (four college introductory economics texts and a one term 12th grade economics book).

As an author (and observer of other authors), I would like to refrain against "trashing" textbooks without some appreciation of the inherent problems in a complex process. Writing textbooks, especially at the basic level, is best described as a "chore." It is not usually a prestigious activity on the "cutting edge" of the discipline and as a result the finest minds are not typically engaged in the task. It is an activity that appeals to "teachers" seeking a "better way" to reach their audience. While some of them may naively quest after "big bucks," the reality is that most books do not survive the small first edition and compensate poorly both the publisher and the author. As textbook packages have become more complicated (with a growing number of ancillary materials), authorship has become more tedious. The endless revisions, bedevilled with time lags and content rearrangements, make it a joyless activity wherein it is difficult even to remember the changes, let alone maintain continuity throughout.

The necessary complexity of the process has been exacerbated, in my experience with three top-of-the-line publishers, by the chaotic nature of the publishing industry. My problems with publishers have never involved censorship or barriers to intellectual integrity. They were rather issues of competence. Editors are rarely competent in economics. Often their editorial authority seems blurred resulting in delays and awkward decisions. Publishers seem to undergo constant changes in internal priorities with the result that production budgets seem continuously influx. Lastly, production of books and marketing of texts are two different fields that are in different worlds. In this unconducive environment, it is a wonder that quality texts are written and available to students.

As a user of economics texts (I claim no insight outside of this field), I would like to set out some guidelines for textbook selection by a "competent" instructor. By competent, I assume that the teacher is: knowledgeable of the subject matter and its place in the total curriculum; devoted to increasing student mastery of the field, aware of "environmental" constraints upon text selection; understanding of the role of the text within a larger instructional package, and, familiar with the alternative texts ranging from the "tour de force" to the "lowest common denominator." My priorities for chosing a "good" text are in order:

1. The text (and ancillaries) is primarily a student aid, to allow students to progress from where they begin to achieve the mastery level sought.
2. The text should "fit" the instructor's pedagogical view of the "proper" role of the textbook.
3. The text should "fit" the instructor's values strategy.
4. The text should expand the student's experience horizon.

Since outstanding texts are rare, and often excellent only in their niche, we should all be willing to participate in the process of improving the textbooks we use. Typically, publishers do not provide that opportunity. Typically, they follow the market test: if it sells, it must be "good." As a result, publishers churn out many new texts with minimal pre-publication testing. They hope to win on one to cover the lost costs of the others.

The solution is relatively obvious. Text users need to be more involved in the text writing and especially text revision process. The model should be the intensive process used by Educational Testing Service in building and maintaining examinations versus the normal casual, trial-and-error system used by most publishers (in my experience). The result would probably be fewer new books per field, while the old chestnuts improve until they atrophy. The loss in choice would be more than matched by the rise in quality.

Consumers of Textbooks: Concerns from the Classroom

by Gary DeBolt

Often today, Americans are besieged with packaged answers to the complicated problems that confront us. We are told that romance or popularity can be found in the "right" toothpaste or mouthwash. Talkshow hosts barker simple solutions to everything from AIDS to xenophobia, from adolescence to wedlock. Authors, clinics, books, audio-tapes and videos tout a multitutde of the "best" and "easiest" diets that will solve our health and weight concerns. Some would have us believe that the solutions to our educational problems can be found in new and improved textbooks. Each author, publisher, or salesman will argue the superiority of his/her product over that of the competition. Sometimes, the controversy over textbooks takes place on a plane above that of the classroom teacher. The purpose of this presentation is to focus on teachers' concerns regarding the use of textbooks.

In some ways, the selection and use of textbooks by classroom teachers is like the selection and use of the elements of one's diet. Consider the following points of comparison:

1. Scores of options are not only available, but are individually promoted (ie. packaged, sold) as "the best", "the most appropriate", "the latest", etc.

2. Teachers, like most would-be dieters, are not experts in textbook selection (dietitians). They want to make good, effective choices but they don't always have the expertise. Having alternatives should not be confused with making good choices.

3. Textbooks, like diets, don't exist in isolation. Both must interact in complex environments in which outside forces are often powerful (ie. censorship, the selection process, community pressures, economic resources). Yet, the bottom line is that using textbooks and dieting are individual endeavors.

4. Teachers (dieters) would like to make appropriate selection and use of textbooks based on the specific needs of their children. However, choices represent large sums of money and must, therefore, be used for a long periods of time; while children and their needs change. From year to year, the effectiveness of a given choice changes.

5. Like dieters, when under stress, teachers often regress to familiar, comfortable behaviors. This may be seen in the tendency to try something new; but, to give up when things become difficult. With textbooks this "comfortable behavior" might mean to use a new textbook the same way the teacher had used the old one or to stop using the new one altogether. With diets, it might mean to return to old patterns of eating. This might lead to teaching as we have always taught (or as we were taught) or eating as we have always eaten.

In the case of selection and use of textbooks, as well as with one's diet, using a balanced approach may be the key. This raises questions which have been addressed by other panels during this conference. Yet, some of these questions might be considered here:

1. Is it appropriate to expect classroom teachers to make these choices? Do they have the expertise and/or the time required by the selection process? What should be the role of students in the selection of textbooks?

2. Should preservice teachers receive theory and guidelines for the selection of textbooks? Where, when? What would those guidelines be? Would they be realistic and congruent with teachers capabilities, the needs of children in both urban and rural contexts, and the realities of teaching in public schools today?

3. What are the responsibilities of authors for content, sequence, following the principles of learning/teaching, and for integrating the various subject matter content understandings?

4. Who is responsible for the vertical and horizontal articulation of all subject areas?
5. What are the "real" lessons children receive from textbooks? (eg. What is the nature of knowledge or authority?) What effect will these lessons have on the growth, development and well-being of our children?

How will teachers as classroom consumers of textbooks react to freedom of choice? Will it be the same way many of us react to freedom of choice in our selection of what we eat? Some will make wise decisions. Some will regress to familiar behavior. And some of us will look for others to help us or to make the choices for us.

In my discussions with teachers, certain themes have emerged regarding what they would like to see in the next generation of textbooks. Some of these wishes would include texts that are:

1. Flexible for use with children with a variety of needs.
2. User-friendly.
3. Clearly written and attractive to students.
4. Interactive: that is to say, texts that direct incisive questions to the student and provide raw data for the student to organize into their own data retrieval chart(s) (a la Taba).
5. Models of good writing practive (eg. the use of topic sentences).
6. Consistent and integrated across all curricula.

Teachers rely upon textbooks and want to effectively use them to help their students to develop their potential. The next generation of textbooks will have long-lasting effects on our classrooms and our children. Teachers repeatly stress the hope that as we struggle with these complex issues we not fall victim to the temptation to look for simple solutions. For as dieters know, there are no "easy", "quick" answers. The road to better use of textbooks by classroom consumers will be a difficult, complicated one. We should not expect to find a "sure-fire", single answer.

Session V: PUBLISHERS

Day and Time: Saturday, April 8, 1989
9:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

Presenters:

Mr. John Ridley
Houghton Mifflin Company

Mr. Dan Caton
D.C. Heath and Co.

Mr. Landon Risteen
Scott, Foresman and Company

Mr. Peter Dow, President
Dow and Co.

Issues and questions:

- academic considerations
- political considerations
- author sensibility
- student/user accessibility
- support/supplementary materials
- role of the profit motive
- role of state adoption policies
- teacher and student acceptance
- as the end point of textbook production, what problems/issues do you wish us - the academic community and consumers - to consider in improving the quality of textbook design and use?

EDC AND THE PROBLEM OF PUBLISHING

Peter Dow

SUNY GENESEO

8 April 1989

Education Development Center's early efforts to establish a working relationship with publishers (c. 1965) foundered partly due to EDC's naivete about the realities of the publishing world (especially the state adoption system), partly due to EDC's unrealistic expectations about what publishers would be willing to invest in such a collaboration, and partly because of lack of imagination on the part of publishers about how a collaboration between the profit-making and non-profit sectors might lead to the creation of new kinds of products from which everyone, including publishers, could benefit. The unwillingness of publishers to risk a significant investment in the science curriculum reform effort probably doomed the it from the start, for it deprived the movement of the vast financial, logistical, and marketing resources of the American textbook industry.

Man: A Course of Study, in particular, was rejected by publishers because of its content, format, cost, teaching demands, and potential for controversy. A course which had been designed to widen the intellectual horizons of children by introducing new subject matter was rejected because the schools were not already teaching anthropology. Its format, which was designed to encourage student-centered, individualized, experience-based instruction, was challenging to teach, and was considered by publishers as "too demanding" for the average teacher. Also, because of the multi-media nature of the program, it cost more than a textbook. Successful installation required the pooling of funds from a number of different budgets (film, supplemental materials, staff development, etc.), and this meant more work for the salesman. Added to this,

the need for teacher training further cooled publisher interest because training requirements were an additional cost and a deterrent to sales. Finally, and probably most significantly, publishers were afraid of the potential for controversy inherent in the teaching of behaviorial biology (read "evolution"), and the study of "primitive" cultures. "Our competitors," they said, "would make issues of the concepts."

What lessons can we learn from this? Where do we go from here? Several thoughts come to mind:

1. We must find a way to circumvent the homogenizing influences of the state adoption system. Successful alternatives to the textbook must be created and marketed in new ways so that there is more diversity in the educational marketplace.

2. Publishers and developers must collaborate from the earliest stages of a project. Developers must learn to face marketing realities before they get too committed to content and format, and publishers must gain the courage to support innovative products. This should be possible when the risk is shared by non-profit institutions and funding agencies.

3. Serious innovation requires a larger investment of federal dollars. Only with the support of federal funds will publishers be willing to take the plunge into new curriculum areas. We must abandon the notion that federal investment in education inevitably leads to greater federal control. It is the present system that creates an unhealthy uniformity.

4. Teachers' collaborative networks are needed to support innovation. Curriculum innovation must be a teacher-driven system, and this means we must find ways to build more teacher-to-teacher interaction between school systems so that the innovators, whereever they are, can share their experiences.

5. We must enlist the best brains in the country, as we did following Sputnik, in our effort to improve the schools. The participation of the university research scholar in the Sputnik-inspired science curriculum reform effort was one of the most significant features of the movement. They should be re-involved if we want to get the schools moving again.

P. B. Dow
Two Page Summary
5/3/89